



## **PAYMENTS AND DEBT COLLECTION POLICY**

### **School Vision:**

**Learning and achieving; today, tomorrow, for life**

### **Payments**

Leverton Primary School no longer accepts cash as a method of payment for any of its services, for example, school lunches, trips, After School/Breakfast Club etc. All payments must be made via the school's cashless payment system – 'School Gateway' for all payments, including school meals. If parents/carers have not yet signed up for this service and require assistance, please speak to the school office and they will be happy to assist you in this matter.

### **School Lunches**

All lunches must be paid for on the day or in advance. Payments must be made via 'School Gateway'.

It is not the responsibility of the School to provide a lunch for pupils. It is the responsibility of the parents/carers to provide a meal, either a school lunch or a packed lunch from home.

## **Unpaid School Meals**

### **If parents/carers fail to pay:**

- School Gateway will send regular texts informing parents/carers of a low balance or arrears for school meals.
- when arrears of two weeks unpaid school meals are reached, the Admin Officer will contact the parents/carers to remind them of the need to pay the outstanding balance.
- if the balance remains unpaid for a further 7 days after notification, the Admin Officer will offer the parents/carers the opportunity to discuss the arrears in line with this policy. At this point no further meals will be given to your child/ren until the balance is paid in full.
- if no payment is received after initial contact from the Admin Officer, the Admin Officer will send a letter, confirming the outstanding balance and the need for you to supply your child/ren with a packed lunch until the debt is settled in full.
- If there is no response after a further 7 days, the Admin Officer will send a second letter arranging an appointment with the Schools Finance Officer to discuss a payment plan.

Persistent failure to pay for school meals and persistent failure to provide a packed lunch will be regarded as an indicator for a more detailed review of the child's health and wellbeing. This can include a review of attendance, punctuality, academic progress and level of general concern regarding the child e.g. appearance, attitude, emotional and mental health.

Parents should note that the school has a duty of care for all pupils and a parent who persistently fails to provide a meal for their child at lunchtime in this situation could be open to a claim of child abuse (neglect).

In exceptional circumstances, such as financial hardship, the school will look at each case individually.

## **Free School Meals**

Please enquire at the School Office for details of the free school meals criteria and an application form. Free school meals must be renewed on an annual basis.

## **Breakfast and Afterschool Clubs**

Parents/carers should also pay in advance for Breakfast and Afterschool Clubs that their child/ren attends. Payment for these services is the same as for all the school's services and must be made as outlined in the Payments section above.

Please ensure that all relevant booking and registration forms and terms and conditions are completed for each child.

Invoice letters will be issued to parents on a monthly basis.

Invoices should be paid within 14 days of the date of the invoice.

The ceiling for arrears of Breakfast/Afterschool Club is two weeks' payments. In exceptional circumstances, such as financial hardship, the school will look at each case individually.

## **If parents/carers fail to pay:**

- an arrears of unpaid fees invoice will be issued stating that the debt must be cleared within 7 days;
- if the balance remains unpaid, the Breakfast/Afterschool Club Leader will offer the parents/carers the opportunity to discuss the arrears in line with this policy. At this point your child/ren will not be able to attend, until all outstanding fees are paid.
- If there is no response after a further 7 days, the Breakfast/Afterschool Club Leader will send a second letter arranging an appointment with the School's Finance Officer to discuss a payment plan.

## **Nursery Sessions and Lunchtime Sessions**

Parents/carers should also pay in advance for Nursery sessions, where not funded for 30 hours, that their child/ren attends. Payment for these services is the same as for all the school's services and must be made as outlined in the Payments section above. Additionally, where children stay for the 30 hours entitlement, lunchtime cover is chargeable.

Please ensure that all relevant booking and registration forms and terms and conditions are completed for each child.

Invoice letters will be issued to parents on a monthly basis.

Invoices should be paid within 14 days of the date of the invoice.

The ceiling for arrears of Nursery payments is £100. In exceptional circumstances, such as financial hardships, the school will look at each case individually.

## **If parents/Carers fail to pay:**

- an arrears of unpaid fees invoice will be issued stating that the debt must be cleared within 7 days;
- if the balance remains unpaid, the Admin Officer will offer the parents/carers the opportunity to discuss the arrears in line with this policy. At this point your child/ren will not be able to attend, until all outstanding fees are paid.
- If there is no response after a further 7 days, the Admin Officer will send a second letter arranging an appointment with the School's Finance Officer to discuss a payment plan.

## **The Governing Body reserves the right to begin legal proceedings against parents/carers to recover any unpaid debts.**

Date approved: September 2020

Approved by: Leverton Primary School Governing Body

Date Reviewed: September 2024

Next review: September 2025